Mr. David Ignatius, foreign editor
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

7/19/91

Dear Mr. Ignatius,

Typical of the Post's inaccurate Middle East reporting is this part of a Jackson Diehl sentence other parts of which, like other parts of that story, are unfair and inaccurate: "...the PLO recognized Israel's right to exist nearly three years ago."(9/14)

The PLO refused to take any such step when confronted with U.S. insistence that it do so. It met and considered this in North Africa. However, Arafat was personally under pressure, and he could in the end not continue to ignore it. However, he was quite specific in <u>not</u> recognizing the right of the <u>State</u> of Israel to exist.

Mumbling out of both sides of his mouth, as usual, he reformulated the demand to substitute "people" for "state" and the administration with great joy said he had said what he refused to say and ~~only~~ along with the rest of the media, the Post got in line behind faulted administration policy. The Post remains there, alas.

The unchanged PLO charter still calls for driving all the Jews into the sea. It regards the only "people" entitled to be in Israel as Arabs. Whether or not you agree, it should be obvious that if Arafat had intended to refer to the State of Israel he would have. He didn't and Diehl still again, with events there again in crisis, repeated the untruthful version. If your editors did not know enough to correct it either they are incompetent or prejudiced.

You should have no trouble retrieving what Arafat actually said from your morgue. It was on live TV and then was obvious. It also is included in Tom Friedman's book.

I suggest that to be fair the Post should on its own retract and publish what Arafat said, verbatim.

Or is something more important than fairness and accuracy these days?

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg